PACE
of southwest michigan

Newsletter

Winter 2024

2024 Reader's Choice
The Herald-Palladium

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Meet PACE's New Executive Director!

Mike Zdrodowski

Mike Zdrodowski has joined the PACE team in the role of Executive Director and has been serving in the role since late October. Mike brings over 30 years of experience in health care, including 20 with community-based organizations.

Mike previously held leadership positions in healthcare, including Vice President of Operations and Ambulatory Services at Munson Health Care Cadillac in Cadillac, Michigan. Mike holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Michigan and a Master of Health Administration from Ohio University.

"I am pleased to join PACE of Southwest Michigan; it is exciting to find a mission-purposed organization providing care and helping people to live independently in their homes. I was challenged to find this type of partner as my family faced the difficult decisions connected with aging, so I can recognize the invaluable services available through PACE."

Letter From the Executive Director

Hello PACE family!

I am the new Executive Director for PACE of Southwest Michigan. I am excited to join this community focused on "surrounding seniors with the care you need to remain in the homes you love" and look forward to meeting you and hearing your PACE stories! I come to PACE after spending more than 25 years supporting non-profit healthcare organizations in northern Michigan, and hope to add to the team dedicated to caring for seniors in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties.

I am learning the details of what services PACE offers and recently got to see the new Niles site. It is beautiful and we hope to open it in the not too distant future. It has been great fun getting to meet the team and I am so impressed with the skills available here at PACE of Southwest Michigan.

I hope that you enjoy the beauty of the winter season! Cheers to the best of 2024 and to the blessings to come in 2025.

With respect and gratitude,

Mike Zdrodowski

Niles Center Updates

Our new Niles Day Center is almost complete! Most of the major construction work is done, and we're now working to get the new center ready to start operating! We expect the Niles Day Center to open in late Spring of 2025, but in the meantime here's a new look at the progress!

Main Clinic Room

Kitchen

Clinic Exam Room

Main Day Center Area

As you can see, there has been a lot of progress made over the last several months! Work continues to load and install different pieces of equipment so that we can provide the same services our participants receive at the current St. Joseph Day Center at the Niles Day Center as well! Stay tuned as we get closer to knowing the Niles Center's official opening day. We're so excited to bring PACE services closer to those in the Greater Niles, South Berrien, and Cass County areas!

Voted #1 In-Home Care Services!

PACE of Southwest Michigan was recently voted Best In-Home Care Services in the 2024 Herald Palladium Reader's Choice Awards! We're honored to be recognized by the community for the services that we provide for our participants, and would like to to highlight our Home Care team and how their work ties into PACE's All-Inclusive model of care.

PACE of Southwest Michigan's Home Care team performs task-based care for our participants, which includes nursing staff tending to acute needs if a participant is unable to come to the Day Center clinic, and aides that come to the home for personal care support. PACE's home care workers perform these duties during business hours.

Rosie Daniels has been a PACE participant since 2017, after she and her husband moved in with their daughter, Beverly. Beverly has been partnering with PACE to care for her mother, keeping her successfully at home. In Rosie's early years with PACE, she enjoyed coming into the day center three days per week to enjoy socialization and activities. Rosie prefers to stay home more now, and enjoys her frequent visits from PACE HCC, also named Rosie.

"I like my mom's NP Thomas very much," says Rosie's daughter, Beverly. "He is always there for us when we have any concern, and I love Rosie, she's amazing."

"I love being able to get one-on-one time with participants and getting to build relationships," says PACE HCC Rosie. "Taking care of them makes me really happy."

Although PACE is a center-based model, bringing in 60-70 participants each day, PACE's home care team makes sure that participants who are unable to come to the Day Center can still receive necessary services.

PACE HCC Rosie with PACE participant Rosie Daniels

Participant Food Pantry

PACE's Social Work and Dieticians have a food pantry available to participants who have urgent food needs. The food pantry includes non-perishable and canned items, which are mainly supplied by PACE staff members. Participants with urgent food needs are encouraged to talk with their PACE dietician or social worker about receiving items from the food pantry, and about any other concerns regarding their food security.

With the upcoming winter season, make sure you have a good plan for food and water storage, and that you have at least a few days worth of food and water in case severe weather keeps you from leaving your home or others from bringing these items to your home.

Participant Clothing Drive

This fall season, PACE of Southwest Michigan staff members organized a clothing drive for our participants. Like our Participant Food Pantry, all items were provided by PACE staff members, and included items such as shirts, sweaters, pants, and shoes. The clothing drive was so popular with participants, that it was extended a few weeks past it's original end date. In the drive's last weeks, books were included in the items that were available to participants. The Participant Clothing Drive is expected to return in the Spring season.

From L to R: PACE Participant Sammy picks out clothes in the clothing drive; a number of items donated to the clothing drive

Participant Story Dominic Donato

Dominic Donato was born in Chicago in 1955, and lived there while he was growing up and through most of his adult life. Dominic worked for Kirby Vacuum as a repairman. “I loved what I did,” Dominic said. “It was like getting a paycheck for nothing.” Dominic worked for Kirby Vacuum for 38 years, and says he only missed 17 days in that whole time. “I was a workaholic,” Dominic said.

PACE participants Dominic and Linda Donato, with their son Mike

Dominic and his wife Linda were high school sweethearts, and have been married for 45 years, plus the seven years they dated before getting married. Together they have one child, a son named Mike.

Dominic and Linda continued living in Chicago until around 12 years ago, when Mike moved them in with him in Watervliet. Dominic jokes that he and Linda wanted to move to Michigan because “the taxes were cheaper.”

Dominic enrolled in PACE in April 2020, and says “everybody’s doing good,” in his care team. He said he especially likes PACE clinic nurse Kelley, and enjoys playing Bingo when he’s at the Day Center. “I just go along with the flow.”

Linda enrolled in PACE in June 2023, and Dominic is glad that his wife is in PACE with him.

Mike has played a key role in taking care of both Dominic and Linda, before and after they both enrolled in PACE. In addition to moving them in with him, Mike continues to help with their daily needs alongside PACE’s support. Since Linda requires signing to communicate, Mike signs for her. Mike remains the primary caregiver in the home setting to Dominic and Linda.

The Donatos are a great example of how PACE partners closely with families to successfully keep our participants in their homes. When Mike was asked what he likes the most about PACE, he responded: “You guys have definitely been the help I need to manage my parents’ healthcare, especially with no family in the area. I don’t know how I’d be able to do it without the team at PACE.”

PACE of southwest michigan

Our Mission:
Surrounding seniors with the care you need to remain in the home you love

Our Vision:
A world without barriers to successful aging

Mark Your Calendar!

The PACE Day Center will be closed on these upcoming dates:

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25

New Year's Day
Wednesday, January 1

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, January 20

Memorial Day
Monday, May 26

Juneteenth
Thursday, June 19

Independence Day
Friday, July 4

Remember, you can always reach PACE 24/7 with our on-call service! 269-408-4322

Get Involved!

Here are the 2025 dates for our Participant Action Committee(PAC) meetings:

Tuesday, January 21

Monday, April 21

Monday, July 21

Monday, October 20

Dietician Recipe *by PACE Dietician Holly*

Microwave 5 Minute Mac and Cheese

Ingredients for 1 serving:
½ cup elbow macaroni
½ cup water
3 tablespoons milk
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese

Preparation
1. Mix the macaroni, water, and salt in a microwaveable mug.
2. Microwave for 2-3 minutes, then stir.
3. Add the milk, cheese, salt, and pepper, then stir.
4. Microwave for another 30 seconds, stir.
5. Enjoy!

Winter Weather Reminder

In the event of inclement weather, PACE utilizes an automated phone call system for notification. If you are scheduled to come to the Day Center, or if you have an external appointment and transportation has been cancelled, you will receive an automated phone call informing you of this cancellation. Please remember that you must have your walkways and driveways cleared for PACE transportation.

PACE Photos

A Royal Visit!

Ms. Blossomtime 2024 Armani Collins visits with our participants!

Fall Activities

Making autumn wreaths and dressing up for Halloween!

PACE Photos

PACE at the BCYF 2024

Our “Out of This World” booth at the Berrien County Youth Fair!

PACE Rakes A Difference!

PACE staff volunteering to help in-need seniors in our community!

New Faces *at* PACE!

Lapresha Alexander
Certified Nurse Aide

Laura Czerkies
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant

Ashley Daugherty
Transportation Coordinator

Rachel Downs
Case Management Assistant

Heather Graham
Certified Nurse Aide

Sarah Hauch
Clinic Charge Nurse

Daisia Johnson
Day Center Nurse Aide

Shanita Johnson
Nurse Aide

Amy Knapp
Care Transitions Nurse

Jiliana Martin
Physical Therapy Assistant

Jeri Skjordal
Day Center Nurse Aide

Jaton Swanson
Certified Nurse Aide

Michael Zdrodowski
Executive Director

PACE
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2900 Lakeview Avenue
St. Joseph, MI 49085
269-408-4322

Scan This Code To Write Us A Google Review!

Participants may be fully and personally responsible for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-PACE program agreement services.

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